

Saturday 19 April 2014



Suffering

1. Is it possible to measure suffering?
Is there a minimum threshold before a circumstance should be considered as suffering?
2. Does a shared suffering allow for a connection between the sufferers?
3. Is suffering necessary for growth and development?
4. Is it always our responsibility to do something if we know someone is suffering? Are we always the right person to help the sufferer?
5. *“One death is a tragedy, a million deaths is a statistic”* Does the human response to suffering diminish, or increase, when there are a large number of people affected by it?

Sympathy and Empathy

6. What is the difference between sympathy and empathy? Is one better than the other?
7. Is it possible to be fully empathetic? How much can you really understand someone, even if you've gone through the same things as each individual's reactions, thoughts and feelings are going to be unique?
8. If you haven't been through what someone has experienced, does that mean you can't understand them? Can it sometimes be condescending if someone says "I understand your pain".
9. Is empathy always the best response? What about silence? Privacy?
10. Should our response to someone suffering always be an emotional response or is it sometimes better to offer a practical solution? When is empathy appropriate? When is action appropriate?
11. Does it lead to feelings of inadequacy where someone appears to cope with suffering better than you?
12. Jesus never sinned. How then is Jesus able to understand and be empathetic towards a sinful humanity?
13. Could Jesus have sinned? If He was not capable of sinning, how could He truly be able to 'sympathise with our weaknesses' (Hebrews 4:15)?
14. Having considered suffering, sympathy and empathy, how do we think God relates to us? Where does compassion fit?